WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.(Currently Amended) A test apparatus for loading certification of offshore lifting containers comprising:

a) ~~a)~~ a ~~central~~ vertical column assembly having ~~means~~ an upper and lower end comprised of at least a pressure actuator means for ~~incrementally~~ longitudinally extending its length.

b) ~~a~~ an attachment assembly having a plurality of flexible members attached to ~~said~~ one end of said ~~central column~~ vertical column assembly and means for connecting to lifting points of a container under test; and

c) a footing assembly ~~pivotally~~ attached ~~horizontally~~ to ~~said~~ ~~central~~ an end of said vertical column assembly opposite said attachment assembly having means for substantially equalizing a force exerted by said pressure actuator across structural members of a container under test.

2. (currently amended)The test apparatus of claim 1 wherein said vertical column assembly further ~~means for incrementally extending~~ comprises a screw jack assembly for extending said vertical column.

3. (currently amended)The test apparatus of claim 1 wherein said vertical column assembly ~~means for incrementally extending~~ further comprises telescopic extension members.

4. (currently amended)The test apparatus of claim 1 wherein said flexible members further comprise ~~extension~~ means for extending their length.

5. (currently amended)The test apparatus of claim 1 wherein said footing assembly ~~further~~ comprises a first transverse elongated member pivotally attached to said vertical column ~~means for extending.~~

6. (currently amended)The test apparatus of claim 1 wherein said footing assembly further comprises at least one ~~bracing means~~ brace member connected ~~between~~ at one end to said vertical column and one end to said footing assembly ~~and said vertical column~~.

7. (currently amended)The test apparatus of claim 1 wherein said footing assembly comprises a plurality of said transverse elongated ~~extension~~ members removably attached in parallel to said first transverse elongated member.

8. (currently amended)The test apparatus of claim 7 wherein each of said ~~footing assembly and said extension~~ transverse elongated members comprise a plurality of vertical feet located perpendicular to said transverse elongated members.

9. (currently amended)The test apparatus of claim 1 wherein said vertical column assembly ~~means for incrementally extending~~ further comprises ~~a linear actuator~~ an extension member having means for telescopic adjustment.

10. (currently amended)The test apparatus of claim 8 wherein said footing assembly further comprises ~~a~~ means for substantially equalizing a load exerted on said ~~feet along the length of said~~ plurality of transverse elongated members~~footing assembly~~.

11. (original) A test apparatus for loading certification of offshore lifting containers comprising:

a) a vertical column assembly comprising a mechanical incremental extending means and a pressure operated extending means;

b) a footing assembly centrally attached to said vertical column assembly; and

c) a means for redistributing loading applied to said footing assembly.

12. (original) The test apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said vertical column further comprises extension members.

13. (original) The test apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said pressure operated extending means is a hydraulic operated linear actuator.

14. (original) The test apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said pressure operated extending means is a compressed air operated linear actuator.

15. (original) The test apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said mechanical incremental extending means is a threaded rod attached to the rod end of said pressure operated extending means and a rotatable hand wheel threaded upon said threaded rod.

16. (original) The test apparatus according to claim 15 wherein at least a portion of said threaded rod is located within a tubular portion of said central column.

17. (original) The test apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said means for redistributing a load applied to said central footing assembly is a plurality of wood beams.

18. (original) The test apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said structural test apparatus further comprises a plurality of footing extension assemblies attached to said footing assembly.

19. (original) The test apparatus according to claim 18 wherein said structural test

apparatus further comprises a plurality of trusses connected to said footing extension assemblies and said vertical column assembly.

20. (original) The test apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said structural test apparatus further comprises a connecting means attached to a blind end of said pressure operated extending means.

21. (original) A method for testing the structural integrity of a lifting container comprising the steps of:

a) placing a test apparatus comprising i) a central vertical column assembly having means for incrementally extending its length; ii) a plurality of flexible members attached to said central column; and iii) a footing assembly attached horizontally to said central vertical column within the confines of the container;

b) b) supporting said test apparatus upon a plurality of load distribution members located between said footing assembly and said container;

c) c) attaching said flexible members to said container;

d) d) adjusting said means for incrementally extending the length of said vertical column until said flexible members are taunt; and

e) e) applying column loading to said footing assembly by further incrementally extending the length of said vertical column and thus distributing said loading throughout said container until a predetermined stress load on the container is reached.

22. (original) The method according to claim 21 wherein the step of incrementally extending the length of said vertical column is achieved by activation of a linear actuator being extended to a predetermined pressure setting.

23. (original) The method according to claim 21 further includes the step of extending said footing assembly to approximate said container length and applying bracing between said footing assembly and said vertical column.

24. (New) A test apparatus for loading certification of offshore lifting containers comprising:

a) a footing

b) at least one pressure extendable column pivotally connected to said footing;

c) a rigging attached to said extendable column opposite said footing; and

d) a plurality of flexible slings attached to said rigging connectable to lifting points of said lifting containers.

25. (New) The test apparatus according to claim 24 wherein said rigging further comprises spreaders, shackles and pins.

26. (New) A method for load testing and certifying the integrity of containers used for hoisting materials in an off-shore environment comprising the steps of:

a. placing an apparatus comprising a footing, at least one pressure extendable column connected to said footing, a rigging attached to said pressure extendable column

opposite said footing, a plurality of flexible slings attached to said rigging, within the confines of a container having lifting points used for hoisting materials in an off-shore environment;

b. attaching said rigging and slings to said lifting points; and

c. extending at least one said pressure extendable column to a predetermined pressure setting thus exerting a strain on said lifting points.